sense, that the essence of its pleasurableness works not in one way but in infinite variety. One mind comes to relish one particular manner of its action so as to hold this to be above all others as the best; but as perhaps every possible variety is to be found with its peculiar admirers, and as we know fashion and custom to hold so important a sway in blassing the taste, we may safely lay down the proposition that Art works in infinite variety of system with equal excellence in all. This is the foundation of style. In Music, in Painting, in Poetry, in Architecture, there are a thousand ways to pleasure—a thousand *Styles*—all equally delightful and beautiful and true.

We may again say in a general sense, that there is a manner of viewing THE BEAUTIFUL whereby it has its essence in the action of two antagonistic principles of likeness and unlikeness—amplifying themselves into uniformity and variety, correspondence and contrast, simplicity and intricacy. The tones of Music do not form melody unless they are combined in a certain *correspondence*; while at the same time if the correspondence were perfect monotony there would be no Music in no *variety*. There must be the action of a principle of *diversity*; while at the same time there must be the action of a principle of *relation* (as in the regulation of the Intervals, the diatonic scale, the rules of melody);—a likeness conjoined with an unlikeness;—a variety governed by a uniformity. And Design in all Art lies in the conception of a certain variety—a certain novelty—a certain departure from monotony—which is pleasing, by the government of a strict relation—correspondence—likeness — uniformity — which constitutes STYLE. There are an infinity of styles: consistency of style is that conformity of the parts of a whole by which it is stamped as being connatural and of a homogeneous spirit: peculiarity of style is that peculiarity of spirit which one work of The Beautiful displays in difference from another: the essence of Style lying simply in the essence (whatever this may be) of character and expression and sentiment,—a varied essence developed in varied manifestation.

The exact demarcation of the good and the bad in Style may be a matter extremely difficult of decision; it may even be practically a point quite exceeding those limits in perplexity beyond which the judgment can scarcely pretend to rely upon the precision of its own powers; but that there are still unalterable boundaries, and uncompromising rules in the very nature of things—in the elements of that which is the Beautiful, it is well to keep always in view. That it is beyond our reach weighs nothing against the still certain existence of a universal government of the right and the wrong, for ever fixed in its nature and sure in its action. And however the full depth of these first essences may seem a perfectly vain object of research, yet can we undoubtedly, and with ease and certainty, attain to many very useful principles: while we may be equally assured that the eduction of such, by the generalization of evidence, and the weighing of the abstract, is the only philosophical means of obtaining that knowledge which is above empiricism, and that skill which is superior to mere experiment.

There is an empirical knowledge of Style, among architects and critics at the present day, which is very far superior to what can be claimed to have been possessed in any former time,—at least in so far that we comprehend in present practice more variety of style than our forefathers of any age can show. The labours of the Antiquary have gathered and systematized the remains of the past, with a care and nicety peculiar to our days; and the present practice of architecture lying entirely in the use of the systems of design thus collected from antiquity, there are demanded of our architects attainments in respect of style—in knowledge of certain system of its variety—which hitherto were never required to be displayed. And although our rule of style, instead of being philosophically educed principles of unity of character, is but the mere rote-precedent of copyism—an almost imaginationless reproduction by the authority of old works,—criticism being not reference to philosophy, but to antiquity—not any weighing in the scale of Truth and Beauty, but a balancing against the mere formulæ which we gather out of the ruins of the past,—Art being not the work of fancy under the control of intellectual taste, but the mere transcription of the bygone controlled by scarcely any superior principle to simple revival,—education being not any investigation of what the beautiful is, but a learning of what the practice of the ancients was,—although in all this we must own the charge that, in disregarding the pursuit of the abstractedly true and preferring the mere digging up of ruins, our age is pursuing a road very wide of the mark of what intellect pronounces ART to be, yet the study of character which this mode of practice forces nevertheless upon the mind, the education in style which indirectly it must more and more produce, ought to be a source of pleasure to us, and confidence. For the more that accuracy of style by precedent is insisted upon (since this is the shape which the progression takes), the more must we naturally come to perceive the true facts of style which the precedents contain—the true system on which Design proceeded when precedent-rule had no being, when naturally-working imagination was the manner of design and abstract judgment the test of criticism. And the more perceiving these facts, the more must we come gradually to inquire into their reason. And this, although an indirect road, may certainly, we will confess, be a good one.

But, imperfect as the criticism of precedent must always be, we have also additionally to observe, that the system of its arrangement in present practice is not by any means complete enough, or its legislation sufficiently precise, to attain the appreciation of its fulness of merit, or to equal the nicety of design with which its original authors worked. Although there is evinced by many a one among our modern architects now, a very praiseworthy appreciation (in a degree) of the truth of style to which the more naturally thinking ancients in their liberty of thought attained, yet there is very much in their works, both the classic and mediæval remains, to which our discrimination of Style does certainly not extend; we have learnt to detect much of their excellence,—but there are still further excellencies—more delicate and refined and deep, which the best of us may well suspect to lie beyond our present reach, and to which undoubtedly we very frequently indeed can detect each other doing violence.

PRECEDENT is thus far a thing to be valued, that it is a voice from an age which, in so far that it was untrammelled by precedent-rule itself, was a better age than this; and the authority of Precedent is thus far a thing to be relied upon, that the intellect of man in those days being freer (in our peculiar province) than now—freer and more under the action of the true principles of judgment which lie in Nature and Reason alone,—although there were failings and faults as there will always be, and although there were peculiar imperfections springing from the peculiar imperfections of the times, Design proceeded more *in the natural way*,—and, following Nature in exact adherence to fact (no sham, no concealment), and obeying Reason in having no standard of criticism, but abstract rationality of means and end, purpose and expression (no misappropriations, no misapplications, no subversions,—no Nelson columns, no stone proportions in iron, no "architecture applied to machinery"), the human mind produced of necessity works rightly principled, by the natural action of that mechanism of man's thought which can effect wrong only when some counteraction is laid upon it, to dislocate its agencies and perplex its operation. And thus are the precedents of uncopied design (when really uncopied)—the works of the Greeks, partly those of the Romans, partly those of the earlier dark ages, and generally those of the later, with fragments and episodes in the works of the times of the more immediate past,—thus are these precedents of uncopied design, although perhaps to be always, as the world grows wiser, in some respect or another capable of improvement, certainly to be allowed a sort of claim of authority, as being the production of a right operation of mental mechanism, and therefore (generally) *right*.

But (as I observed) following precedent for our standard of Style as it is the custom at present to do, the present extent to which the system is laid down, and the present manner in which it is carried out fall short, very materially, of the fulness of the spirit of ancient works. And indeed we may affirm it as indubitable, that the greatest attainments possible in the eduction of system merely from examples, must always leave the deeper and more delicate distinctions, in which lies so great a share of the charm of authentic works, undiscriminated and unavailable in reproduction. Even when we have attained to the discernment of the faults, so as to be able to avoid the bad, we may still fall short of the full spirit of the good, and fail to overtake many of the beauties. And it is so with our precedent-critics,—their knowledge of Style is only partial—general more than particular—extending only to the broader distinctions and chief lineaments, while the government of Style carries its authority with equal force down to minute details of unity and relation, and delicate discriminations of sentiment and character which are quite beyond their vision. It was so when Classic copyism was in vogue, it is no less so now, when this has chiefly given way to Mediæval copyism,—our reproductions of ancient Design lack very much of the spirit to which ancient works owe their essential value: and it is but a necessary result of the simple fact of copyism,—in so far that the ancient mind worked *naturally*, and followed those abstract principles of Design which are innate in the unadulterated imagination, while the modern mind has but the far more difficult and uncertain guide of imitation,—in so far that the ancient works are designed by the spirit of Design, and the modern by quite another.

The study of examples of design for the eduction of the principles of Style is one of the very first importance to the student. The perception of the grand distinctions which principally separate what we are accustomed to call peculiarly the various styles of Architecture may soon be mastered; and the discernment of the chief subdivisions of those styles produced by different periods, and the idiosyncracies of different nations, is an attainment which it is not difficult to reach; but the knowledge of Style is not therefore an easy acquisition, or the acquirement of its spirit a simple object of research;—for these are but the greater distinctions, which appear on the surface, but the elements of whose system in its truth and fulness lie deeper, in the more delicate and more difficultly discriminable differences which, although the lesser principles, are frequently the more important directors of beauty in Style. The more you search and compare and test the authentic works of antiquity, the more will you detect in them minute but essential illustrations of variety of spirit, and the more will you find exemplifications of accurate aptness and adjustment in style to which their modern imitator is a stranger—delicate tuning in a design for which the modern hand seems scarcely light enough, for which the modern ear seems scarcely to possess the nice distinguishment. And the perception of this is learning STYLE, and acquiring therein one of the vital powers of the Architect.

And lastly, as the great value of this employment of Precedent and this study of its system is, that the result may be the overthrow of the spirit of Precedent itself in its present government, to the evil consequences of which our inferiority to the ancients in our very imitations of them, and our still greater inferiority in that strange disavowal of all power of originality which appears to be so established with us as an axiom of thought, are truthfully to be referred;—and as the hope is a rational one that even our present precedent-government itself, by its increasing strictness, will ultimately terminate in its introduction of the better spirit of true Design to supplant itself;—it may not be amiss to counsel the student thus studying the precedents of antiquity, to study them with the special purpose among the rest of rising superior to their government—rising to the level assumed by their authors in their production, and displayed, by the very fact of their producing them, to be within the reach of the right thinking mind,—to study them, in short, all the while as mere examples of what *has been produced*, not canons of what *is is to be reproduced*—as works of genius which he ought to equal as equally the possessor of the power with their producers, or rather ought to *excel* as excelling them in the advancing progress of the world. ROBERT KERR.

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